

CHECKING BY REPORT OF AUDITOR

WERE ACCOUNTANTS OF INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE—THREE AT WORK—IS IT INVESTIGATION OF STATE AUDITOR OR I. I. TRUSTEES, OR BOTH?—MYSTERY, MYSTERY EVERYWHERE.

So thick is the air of mystery surrounding the operations of the Investigating Committee of the Internal Improvement Fund, if you look according to the secret rules, "made and provided" by the servants of the public, called members of the Legislature, that it could not be cut with a knife—not even with an accountant's erasing knife.

Looking in another direction, the fog is not so thick, though this the members of the committee will neither affirm nor deny.

This is where the heels of the ostrich stick up, while the head is buried in the sand of "executive session."

The committee will not admit that accountants are now on the job, neither will the accountants, but that they are toiling over the records of the Internal Improvement Fund at a long table in the office of the Comptroller cannot be disputed.

First was Mr. Martin of New York—genial, but non-committal; then another, who went to work yesterday. Not so happy looking, perhaps, because here the veil of mystery was sinking down upon Mr. Fuller, also of New York.

Uncertainty intervenes as to whether Fuller is the right name. He looked like Mr. Fuller, and he seemed to handle a pen like Mr. Fuller, still it might not have been Mr. Fuller. Exactness of identity is not easy without Bertillon measurements, since the Buckman "executive session" gag has been tied to the mouths of the investigating committee.

Let that pass, however, as it is but an incident. Two accountants were at work. Then, late in the afternoon, another was doing stunts with the records.

Nothing doing in the way of identity. The cloud of uncertainty hanging about Mr. Fuller was resolved into dark night of mystery concerning the third.

But, as said, this is merely an incident—two incidents if you choose to couple your bets.

The main point is that they were at work.

And what kind of work was it that was intended to lay bare to the public the transactions of the Internal Improvement Fund?

Checking the printed report of the State Auditor.

That's all. Not Wilson's, but still "That's all."

Seemed like a challenge of the State Auditor's work; suspicion that he might have overlooked something.

Perhaps, though, this is more of the mystery piled on by Buckman "executive session" rule. Maybe the State Auditor is to be investigated first, although the resolution did not mention that point.

Still, if the purpose was not to investigate the State Auditor, his work on the Internal Improvement Fund is being used as a basis for investigation, so the query—is it the Trustees who are to be investigated, or is it the State Auditor, or is it both?

It may be a matter of embarrassment to the State Auditor's office that the work done therein was not acceptable to the Legislature, inasmuch as what the State Auditor did in the way of checking up the transactions of the Trustees is to be done again by a force of imported accountants.

This work has been done by the State Auditor, along with the other duties of his office, at a yearly salary, but

it is being done over again, by the imported accountants—some of it at least—at a cost to the State of \$60 a day, more or less.

More uncertainty. Uncertainty all along the line. Uncertainty of the State Auditor's report, uncertainty of the honesty of the Trustees, UNCERTAINTY OF THE PUBLIC, therefore the gag rule of the committee.

Mystery everywhere, but the mystified accountants are working mysteriously for the committee of mystery on the records of mystery that may solve the mysterious problem.

The State Auditor's report will probably prove valuable to them as an aid in checking up. His reports are taken

as accurate accounts of the other departments of the State, so perhaps the accountants are not in error in using his report of the Internal Improvement Trustees in their work of investigation.

A meeting of the Investigating Committee was held last night, at which the work of the accountants was discussed.

The question of employing counsel may have been talked about, but no definite decision was reached, the matter maybe lying over until another meeting.

Who can tell? Ask Mr. Buckman, "he probably knows."

BY THE WAY.

Mr. Gray, representing the publishing house of B. F. Johnson Company of Richmond, Va., arrived in the city yesterday. He states that his firm, like other publishing houses outside of the American Book Company, favor State uniformity of text books. Being asked if he would appear before the Legislative Committee on Education, Mr. Gray said that Dr. Branham of the American Book Company appeared before the committee and spoke against uniformity he would ask permission to make an address in favor of the uniform system.

Former Governor Jennings and President Hulley of Stetson have adjusted their grievances, and have shaken hands in token of friendly feeling, while Steve Melton has untied the fish line that held the turtle dove of peace and let her flutter.

Two candidates for Governor were in town yesterday—two Alberts—Jennings and Gilchrist. The similarity of the names by which their friends speak of them caused a discussion of the meaning of the initial each wears.

One statesman suggested that the "T." of Jennings stood for Turpentine, while the other statesman who had report to make on Gilchrist, said "W." of the gentleman from Punta Gorda means Waycross.

Those who differ say it is Thomas Albert Jennings and Albert Waller Gilchrist.

Mr. Gilchrist has some advantage, perhaps, over Mr. Jennings thus far, because a cigar has been named for the candidate who has one foot planted at Punta Gorda and the other at Waycross, Ga.

Mr. Gilchrist is proud of the cigar; he is right, because it is a good cigar. He will be pleased to explain the label on the box to those seeking label lore.

Mr. A. P. Jordan of the Punta Gorda Herald, is here, not on a fishing excursion, because he never goes fishing. He has not the time. It takes all his spare moments to write stories of the other fellow's catch. Some day when he can take a day of Mr. Jordan proposes to go fishing, and part of his equipment will be a pair of scales, so arranged as to get the weight of the biggest one—the one that always gets away.

Now, however, Mr. Jordan is on a campaign for division of DeSoto County. Not cutting in two pieces, but three slices are wanted; make three counties out of the present one of DeSoto is the wish of Mr. Jordan and the people of the northern portion of the county. The people of Arcadia and the central part of the county want the same condition to continue, but Mr. Jordan has baited his hook with substantial facts, he declares, and has cast his line into the Legislative waters.

EIGHTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY, I. O. O. F.

The members of Bon Lodge No. 5, I. O. O. F., of this city will meet at their lodge rooms Friday evening at 8 o'clock to celebrate the eighty-eighth anniversary of the Order in America. All Legislators who are members, and visiting Odd Fellow are especially invited to attend and enjoy the occasion with us. An address will be delivered by Hon. B. C. Abernethy and others.

SENATE PASSED CHILD LABOR BILL.

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on second reading for amendment, cutting out the increase of salary.

Some misunderstanding seemed to prevail between this bill and one passed the previous day, that granted increase of salary to the Inspector of Feed Stuffs, together with an increase of traveling expenses, and Senator Humphries, in discussing the bills, said that the Inspector of Feed Stuffs carried a side line of merchandise for which he solicited orders.

Senator Adams understood him to say that it was the Assistant State Chemist who had been carrying the side line, and said that it was a serious charge and he would withhold the bill pending investigation.

Senator Humphries said it was the Inspector of Feed Stuffs of whom he was speaking, and continued to discuss the bills, saying among other things, that "the State Chemist was not a very busy man during the past year." He mentioned having been in many parts of the State and finding the State Chemist here at the same time, and thought as long as he seemed to be having an easy time no increase of salary should be granted.

He was speaking along this line, when interrupted by Senator Adams, who said: "The Senator has spoken twenty minutes on a bill that is now at the other end of the building. Senator Humphries puts himself in the attitude of opposing this bill because he does not like a bill that has been passed."

The bill was made a special order for Monday at 4 p. m. on motion of Senator Adams.

Senator Trammell announced that the Committee on Corporations would meet Tuesday afternoon to consider the franchise tax bills, and that persons who desired could appear.

Real brisk business of the day, however, was working for adjournment.

Senator Broome started the ball by asking for observance of Memorial Day, adjourning until 10 o'clock Saturday morning, which was adopted.

This was allowed to rest for a while, and then Senator West of the First asked for reconsideration of the vote on Senator Broome's motion.

The motion was carried, and then Senator Cone moved as substitute for Senator Broome's original motion, that the Senate adjourn until 10 o'clock to-day.

This brought forth an eloquent appeal from Senator Broome that Memorial Day be observed, and he charged that the object of the motion of Senator Cone was really to hold a session to-day and then adjourn until Monday afternoon, a scheme for several days' recess.

His denunciation of the second motion prevailed, and adjournment was taken until 10 o'clock Saturday morning.

Following was the vote on Senator Broome's motion: Yeas—Senators Baker, Beard, Broome, Buckman, Cottrell, Girardeau, Henderson, Hudson, Humphries, Jackson, Trammell, Willis, Withers, Zim—14.

Nays—Senators Adams, Cone, Crews, Crill, Massey, Neel, Sams, West of the First, West of the Fourth—9.

The Elephant's Sleep.
One of many mysteries connected with the elephant is that his huge body needs less sleep than anything else that lives. Four or five hours in the night suffice—two just before midnight, lying down on one side; two just after 1 o'clock, lying down on the other. The rest of the silent hours are filled with eating and digesting and long grumbling soliloquies.—Kipling's "Moti Gaj, Mutineer."

"Is this a free translation?" asked the girl in the bookstore. "No, miss," replied the highly intelligent clerk; "it costs 50 cents."

P. T. Nicholson
The Jeweler



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